

## Message Text

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PAGE 01 CANBER 06371 230907Z

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ACTION EA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SPC-03 SS-20

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MC-02 /174 W

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R 230835Z NOV 73

FM AMEMBASSY CANBERRA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2049

INFO CINCPAC HONOLULU

AMCONSUL MELBOURNE

AMCONSUL SYDNEY

COMNAVSTA HAROLD E HOLT

C O N F I D E N T I A L CANBERRA 6371

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, AS, US

SUBJ: ADVANCE CONSULTATION REGARDING US MILITARY ALERT

REF: CANBERRA 6346

1. SUMMARY: LACK CONSULTATION PRIOR TO US MILITARY ALERT HAS BECOME SIGNIFICANT PUBLIC ISSUE IN AUSTRALIA. AMBASSADOR SUCCEEDED DURING WIDELY REPORTED PRESS CLUB APPEARANCE IN DEFLECTING ATTENTION TOWARD DEFMIN BARNARD TALKS ON NORTHWEST CAPE. IT IS NOW MOST IMPORTANT THAT BARNARD TALKS RESULT IN CREDIBLE AGREEMENT UPON FUTURE CONSULTATIONS. END SUMMARY.

1. AMBASSADOR'S APPEARANCE NOVEMBER 21 BEFORE MELBOURNE PRESS CLUB RECEIVED EXTENSIVE NATIONAL TELEVISION AND PRESS COVERAGE. AS ANTICIPATED REFTEL, REPORTERS' QUESTIONS FOCUSED SHARPLY UPON IMPLICATIONS OF US WORLDWIDE MILITARY ALERT AND FAILURE OF USG TO CONSULT WITH GOA IN ADVANCE (PARTICULARLY RE NORTHWEST CAPE).

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PAGE 02 CANBER 06371 230907Z

2. AMBASSADOR ACKNOWLEDGED THERE HAD BEEN NO ADVANCE NOTICE BUT STRESSED GRAVITY AND IMMEDIACY OF SITUATION REQUIRING ALERT. HE POINTED OUT THAT US HAD SHARED INFORMATION ABOUT MIDDLE EAST WITH GOA ON DAY-TO-DAY BASIS THROUGHOUT CRISIS. AMBASSADOR SAID GOA HAD LEARNED "WITHIN MOMENTS" OF WORLDWIDE ALERT. HE EXPLAINED THAT ALERT HAD NO REAL MEANING TO COMMUNICATIONS RELAY STATION. HE REFUTED ARGUMENT THAT US INSTALLATIONS REPRESENTED "LIGHTENING RODS" FOR NUCLEAR RETALIATION. ASKED IF ALERT ISSUE WOULD WORSEN RELATIONS BETWEEN US AND AUSTRALIA, AMBASSADOR SAID IT COULD IF IT WERE ALLOWED TO, BUT HE WAS CONFIDENT IT WOULD NOT. AMBASSADOR TURNED ATTENTION OF PRESS TOWARD DEFMIN BARNARD'S TALKS ON NORTHWEST CAPE IN WASHINGTON IN JANUARY WHEN ARRANGEMENTS FOR IMPROVED US/GOA CONSULTATION WOULD BE DISCUSSED.

3. PARLIAMENTARY QUESTIONS ON SUBJECT OF ALERT CONTINUED NOVEMBER 22. QUERIED ABOUT AMBASSADOR GREEN'S STATEMENT THAT GOA HAD LEARNED OF ALERT MOMENTS AFTER THE FACT, FOREIGN MINISTER WILLESEE SAID: "WE DID KNOW AFTER IT WENT THROUGH NORTHWEST CAPE THAT THE ALERT WAS ON. BUT AT NO STAGE WERE WE INFORMED OFFICIALLY BY THE AMERICANS THAT THE ALERT WAS ON." WHITLAM ANSWERED ANOTHER CRITICAL OPPOSITION QUESTION BY REPEATING THAT AUSTRALIA HAD NOT BEEN CONSULTED AND ADDED: "THE ANZUS TREATY AND THE UNITED STATES NAVAL COMMUNICATIONS STATION AGREEMENT WOULD BOTH INDICATE THAT AUSTRALIA SHOULD HAVE BEEN CONSULTED."

4. MEDIA COVERAGE HAS BEEN PROMINENT AND EMOTIONAL. EXAMPLES OF HEADLINES: THE AUSTRALIAN -- "PM SAYS WE SHOULD HAVE BEEN TOLD OF US ALERT; ANZUS, NAVAL TREATIES IGNORED." SYDNEY MORNING HERALD -- "WHITLAM ATTACKS US OVER ALERT," AND "AUSTRALIA LEARNT OF ALERT 'IN MOMENTS' -- GREEN." MELBOURNE AGE EDITORIAL ENTITLED "WHEN OUR HOT LINE RAN COLD" SAYS "NEITHER NATO POWERS NOR AUSTRALIA ARE SATISFIED WITH BEING LEFT IN THE DARK." EDITORIAL CONCLUDES: "WHEN THE DEFENCE MINISTER (MR. BARNARD) VISITS WASHINGTON IN JANUARY HE MAY HAVE SOME FENCE MENDING TO DO; HE WILL HAVE A STRONGER CASE FOR PROTESTING AGAINST THIS OFF-HAND TREATMENT OF AN ALLIED GOVERNMENT. THE FAILURE IN COMMUNICATION, WHETHER DELIBERATE OR ACCIDENTAL, HAS STRENGTHENED AUSTRALIA'S CASE FOR AN INCREASED MEASURE OF CONTROL OVER ITS OWN TERRITORY." WHITLAM COMMENDED THE AGE EDITORIAL BEFORE PARILAMENT. THE AUSTRALIAN EDITORIAL ENTITLED "IF MOSCOW KNEW, WHY NOT US?" TAKES SIMILAR LINE

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 CANBER 06371 230907Z

AND CONCLUDES AS FOLLOWS: "THERE CAN BE NO DOUBT THAT MOST AUSTRALIANS, WHICHEVER WAY THEY VOTE, FEEL THAT THEIR GOVERNMENT SHOULD BE INFORMED BEFORE PARTS OF OUR TERRITORY BECOME POTENTIAL TARGETS IN A NUCLEAR WAR. MR. BARNARD CAN BE EXPECTED TO PUT THAT VIEW IN WASHINGTON AND TO PUT IT WITH SOME FORCE."

5. COMMENT: IT IS MOST IMPORTANT THAT BARNARD VISIT TO WASHINGTON RESULT IN CREDIBLE AGREEMENT ON FUTURE CONSULTATIONS. NORTHWEST

CAPE IS UNFORTUNATELY A PROMINENT PUBLIC ISSUE AGAIN. AMBASSADOR IS MEETING WITH FONMIN WILLESEE NOVEMBER 26 AND WILL REVIEW ENTIRE PROBLEM. WE ANTICIPATE THAT GOA WILL COOPERATE FULLY IN ENDEAVORING TO DAMPEN DOWN PUBLIC CONCERN. OBVIOUSLY, ONE SIDE EFFECT IS THAT WHITLAM'S SLUR ON US MOTIVATION FOR ALERT (WHICH HE SINCE WITHDREW) HAS BECOME DISTINCTLY SECONDARY ISSUE DESPITE BELATED OPPOSITION EFFORTS TO CAPITALIZE UPON IT.

6. PRESS AND PARLIAMENTARY ATTENTION HAS BEEN FIXED ALMOST EXCLUSIVELY UPON MILITARY ALERT AT NORTHWEST CAPE. AMBASSADOR SUCCESSFULLY DEFLECTED REPORTER'S QUESTION ABOUT ROLE OF WOOMERA AND PINE GAP DURING MIDDLE EAST CRISIS. GREEN

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## Message Attributes

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